

Motor Vehicle Enthusiasts Club

No 4

NOV 06

TRANSMISSION

The voice of the Motor Vehicle Enthusiasts Club



If you find you need more information about this club or just can't wait to join ring Peet Menzies on 89 81 4746
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For correspondence regarding this newsletter email
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Collectors

With not a lot of newsworthy events I have been annoying some of our members to check out some of their goodies. I approached Brian Smith with the idea of a story about his Lagonda but I discovered he has lots lots more interesting stuff. This is a summary of



The Graveyard

the bits that appealed to me.
Brian's backyard is very orderly. Everything is arranged in rows, piles and batches. First thing that meets the eye is a double row of assorted rust covered vehicles. Brian calls it "the graveyard". Amongst this lot I spied a WW1 ammo carrier and a Dodge Fargo truck. "Everything here has a story," says Brian. There is so much good stuff here, they will have to be short stories or I will be late for tea tonight. I used to think of International Harvester as an U.S.A. brand. Not necessarily, as Brian has a tractor with "made in England" stamped on it. A cluster of stationary engines is carefully protected from the sun by a layer of creeping

vines and wandering into a large economy sized shed you are guided by a row of Ford sidevalve v8 engines.



Stationary engines carefully wrapped in creepers

The first impression in the shed is that it is chock a block. The impression doesn't fade. Against the wall behind the Humber chassis that's next to you is a 1939 Buick complete with straight 8, but you can't really get that close. The Humber at your feet is all restored and running except for the body which is sitting on drums over the other side. The car is a 1953 Super Snipe Cabriolet. They only made 4, all for the fleet of Queen Elizabeth's coronation tour. It has the bracket for her coat of arms, an electric window between the back seat and front, intercom and horizontal blinds from the front seat backrests that pull out over the rear passenger's lap when they have the roof down. Can't have royalty showing too much leg in the 1950's. Brian collected the car in poor condition 8 yrs ago from a farm in Deniliquin in NSW. Cruising on still in the shed is a Henry Meadows engine



The Humber. Queen Elizabeth rode in here.

which is a spare for his Lagonda car. The 6 cyl engine has 12 spark plugs, 6 by magneto and 6 by coil. There is a bunch on Jeep sidevalve and ohc engines, Jag engines and Ford v8 stuff. Two aluminium straight 8 blocks stand out amongst a bunch of Humber and Chev ones. I reckon if you named any part off any 50's vehicle there is probably one here. Past a couple of series 3 Humber Super Snipes, through a door and another row of Super Snipes. A station wagon Snipe is unusual. It's a series 5. There are plenty of series 4 to keep it company. It seems the Humber people numbered their cars by mk 1.2.3etc and when the numbers got too high, they started again with series 1.2.3etc. Sir William Slim, an ex Aussie Prime Minister, was a previous owner of Brian's Mk 4b. This is an early 50's car and the leather seats still look and smell beautiful. The long bonnet with the glass partition between front and back takes away any doubt that this is a real limousine. Around the side of the shed is a bunch of jeeps all neatly parked in a row. I think these orderly lines are part of Brian's Pommie heritage seeping through. Change sheds to a smaller one near the house we find a 1927 Rugby ute with a Brian built body, More Humbers and the vehicle with the spanners on it at the moment is a Jaguar Mk 7.

What attracted me to Brian's place was his Lagonda. I

had never heard of the make until he spoke of it. Brian's car dates from 1934, the cars being built in England as a luxury vehicle to rival Rolls Royce and Bentley. This particular example was one of three to have the chassis, engine, firewall and grille built in England then shipped to Australia. In Australia the body was hand built by Martin & King at Malvern in Victoria. They used the chassis and grille from a model "Rapide" then fitted a larger Henry Meadows 4.5 litre engine, hence the model M45 for this vehicle. It boasts a 4 speed crash gearbox with 4 wheel rod operated brakes, 19" wheels with 17" brake drums. 38 cwt. and 29 hp. Manufacturers claimed top speed was 97mph but the previous owner replaced the cast iron pistons with aluminium ones and topped it out at 107mph. Brian has had it up to 100mph just to prove she'll still pull the magic ton. One of the amazing



Lagonda

things about this very impressive car is that it has never been restored. Brian has just painted the outside of the body, but the rest of it, especially the interior is quite serviceable. After chasing all over the place for a handbook and obtaining one, he found the original one under the back seat. Rummaging through an envelope of assorted papers, Brian produced the original registration certificate dated July 19 1934. For whatever reason the certificate is dated July but the actual registration period started in Nov. The price was 1/- for the certificate, £9/18/- for 12 months registration and 3/- for the num-



1929 Rugby



Interior very serviceable.



Both sides of the very handsome engine bay



Beautiful long bonnet guides the way

berplates. That's £10/2/- total. Sounds cheap eh? I asked Brian how he came to own such a car. As an apprentice carpenter-joiner in a foundry in England in the nineteen fifties, the foundry moulder offered him a lift. After work they went to the tradesman's car and it was a Lagonda. During the trip home he was so impressed by the luxury and performance he decided that one day he would own one. It was 25 years later after searching for 17 years that he attained his goal. And they still make em. Aston Martin Lagonda is still a luxury car. Earlier in this article it was mentioned they sent 3 chassis to Australia and built 3 cars. This is the only one to survive.

Shaping Aluminium DVD

Did you ever fancy making your own panels on a vintage racer or are restoring an old car that you can't get panels for? Interested? Well a bloke by the name of Ron Covell has made a series of DVDs about metalwork. To see if they were any good I bought the first one called "Shaping Aluminium with Hand Tools". I have bought books on the subject but they invariably get filled up with other useless stuff that you've heard before and only a small bit about the subject you want. Not so with this video. A very short introduction showing a couple of prize winning hand built cars he has made and he is straight into it. First off he shows how to make the pattern out of cardboard (they call it chipboard in USA), annealing the aluminium (they call it aluminum) and then right in front of your eyes he starts beating the shit out of the flat bit of aluminium till it is a horrible mess. He then says this is where most people give up. He then shows how to shrink the edges and in a couple of minutes it looks a lot like what it's meant to. Running over the same steps a couple more times and viola! He has ¼ of the nose cone for a speedcar. Repeat that 3 more times and you have 4 bits of nosecone which you weld together. No fileing or grinding off the welds though. You knock them flat with hammer and dolly. Finishing off with a file to mark the high spots, they are hammered down till the finish is good enough for polishing or painting. When the camera starts rolling on each step, it doesn't stop until that section is finished so you can see exactly how many times he checks the fit or straightness or what ever. You also see how long it takes and it is not all that long. I'm sure with a bit of perseverance one could pick up these skills. They say a picture is worth a thousand words. A video is worth a million of em. Inspired? They are available from the Pitstop Bookshop in Perth. Cost is \$60 plus about \$7 postage. Worth every cent I reckon.

Noel & Kath Neil's "A" National and Bay to Birdwood Run

On 7 September at 10am our trip to Adelaide started, originally it was planned to drive the "A" which would tow our small camp trailer. Unfortunately mother nature put a stop to this with very gusty conditions, so the "A" was trailed behind the Nissan Patrol which wasn't too happy with the wind in some areas, so the "A" with new motor etc would not of coped at all.

Whilst in Port Augusta we did the Pichi Richi Railway trip on the Afgan express, this is very good taking 6 hrs from start to finish. Quorn was destination where we had a 2 hour lunch break. Stayed in Port Augusta for 5 days, then journeyed onto Whyalla for 3 days. Noel couldn't resist the Coffin Bay oysters and not being a person for half measurers, he purchased 10 dozen.

Met up with Rita & John Buckley from UK (Wales really) who bought an "A" model tourer several months before from Port Pirie. They were driving from SA to Darwin, then down the west coast to the Nationals in Adelaide.

Went through One Steel – steel & coke making facility at Whyalla, a very informative tour which went nearly 3 hours on a coach. Stayed a night in Port Pirie Beach Caravan Park. After we left the Nissan & trailer at Boyce & Mary Schulz's property in Port Germein, we were now driving the "A" with all our gear needed for Adelaide. Whilst in Port Pirie park there was a chap swimming and singing Opera in a very nice tenor voice, this went on for 2 ½ hours. "Maybe he had to sing to stop his teeth from chattering, temperature were only 16deg maximum."

Made excellent time to Adelaide arriving at 2pm, stayed in a Unit on West Beach Road which was in walking distance of rally headquarters at the Woolshed, Adelaide Shores.

Sunday 24 September at 7am went a block to Barrett Reserve at west beach to form up for the run to Birdwood. There were approximately 1700 vehicles that took part (veteran, motorbikes, commercials, vintage and classic up to 1955). The "A"s formed the biggest group with over 100 cars, the biggest single vehicle type to participate. The weather on the day was shocking with on and off showers all day also very very cold and windy. That night was "Nibble and Natter" at "A" headquarters.

Monday was Registration Day for the Nationals, also 3 craft sessions for ladies (necklace & earring making, Brooch workshop, special card class). There were 4-5 technical talks over the Nationals

for men.

We were "A" National entrant **No 1** (people have been nearly ready to kill for that number) and for the Birdwood run we were entrants No 383.

Tuesday all the rally entrants went on a River Torrens cruise on the "MV Dolphin Explorer". Had a wonderful lunch on board (all freshly cooked by staff) saw lots of dolphins. During dinner at the Woolshed we were entertained by the "Elite Accordion Group", music was excellent.

Wednesday was the mandatory run to Strathalbyn, up until today people could please themselves as to what activities they did. A beautiful run through Adelaide Hills at our leisure; because of the age of some entrants lots of pit stops were needed. On arrival at Strathalbyn Show Grounds all drivers were presented with a Parker Pen in a nice case. Looked at all the antique shops. Had a counter lunch, then drove back to Adelaide via picturesque farming valleys of Meadows and Clarendon.

Thursday, caught the bus and did the city shops, chinese markets, Rundle Mall, produce and clothing markets. Returned to Unit early afternoon because tonight was "Presentation Dinner" where we get all glammed up in Black & White or era fashions to match our cars. The entertainment tonight was jazz, the band was called "Sidewalk Swing" – very good.

Friday morning breakfast was in the form of a farewell meal to say goodbye to all our old and new friends! Went back to Port Germein on the Saturday, loaded up the Nissan and joined Terry & Cheryle Ciantar who drove back to Katherine with us. They drove a 928 "A" tourer, going home to McKay via the scenic route. Has a wonderful time at the rallies, met lots and lots of delightful cars, met even more people with the same interests, were very well fed and entertained. Came home with a host of memories.

Till next time, regards Kath.

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Everyone's travelling

Your editor is currently cruising interstate in our '63 Falcon Futura. The first stop was Alice Springs for the Masters Games. Whilst there it was pretty obvious by the cars on the road there are plenty of motoring enthusiasts in the Alice. During a 60km cycle race, conversation about cars got me a contact in Victoria regarding Packards. (they call it the friendly games)

I was fortunate to get an invite to Fred and Lyn Twowig's home. (that's pronounced Toohey like the beer) As he gave me a guided tour of his shed and beyond I saw a familiar pattern emerging. Just about every item Fred has collected has a story to go with it. Fred's collection is entirely from the bottom end of the Territory and mostly revolves around motorbikes. Pride



of place is an immaculate 1949 350 MAC Velo-cette. Not quite finished but running nicely and very smicko. In typical English style with lots of polished alloy and chrome the big fishtail muffler sets it off perfectly. On the bench is a Petter 2 stroke stationery engine which is being built from the best parts of 3. He had just finished scraping the white metal main bearings. It was amazing to see how rusty the crank

had been on the webs but the bearing surfaces were perfect. Further into the shed stands a 45 cubic inch WLA Harley Davidson. Not connected at the moment is a sidecar. The chassis and frame are intact but Fred has to make the body. Behind the Harley on a stand sits a Triumph 500 CM motor from 1929. The motor is completed but the rest of the bike is on the floor nearby, patiently waiting its turn. The mention of an Adler makes my ears prick up and nostalgic memories start running through my mind so its out the back and drawing back sheets of iron and tarps (Alice Springians think it rains down there) reveals a treasure trove of goodies that has me severely dribbling. Amongst others is a 1973 KTM

Enduro, B31 BSA 350, 1938 BMW R66S from Utopia station and of course the 250 Adler. But surrounding all these bikes is so much good stuff. A girder front end of unidentified origins from the Finke tip. Several Matchless or AJS frames of different models (engine is in the shed). An ex station rigid Harley frame that had been welded up and extra



Some desirable bikes in this lot

tubes welded in to make it stronger. Another Velo frame. This one is from a 1953 alloy MAC 350 which had been converted to a scramble bike. Once again the engine is in the shed. Cruising around the corner of the shed reveals more goodies. Two Cooper engines keep a Southern Cross petrol engine company with more sets of girder forks. What I thought was a bit of bent pipe laying around is suspected to be a pair of Indian handlebars.

Well you might reckon that's about it. Nope. Down the back a bit there is a windmill sticking up in the sky. On closer inspection it is surrounded by pump jacks of various sizes and brands. The biggest and most impressive one sported the name "Metters" It didn't look like a stove. The windmill itself is a Comet which came from a house at Ti Tree. The house provided accommodation for ringers on Ti Tree station. Fred disassembled it and brought it home on many trips. He made new bearings for it and now it its working perfectly. A beaut sight.

From a topender's point of view, it's amazing how things can lay around in the weather and not deteriorate. The dry climate is certainly a lot kinder to just about anything we petrol blooded people like to collect. But its not home.



Smoking up the water

When I was a young feller I can clearly remember going to the Patawalonga boat haven in Adelaide to see this car called an Amphicar strut it's stuff. It was a convertible with the roof down and was taking people for rides and would hoon down the boat ramp, hit the water with a big splash, cruise round the lake a bit then drive back to the boat ramp and



back to the carpark with the twin props still turning. All these memories were prompted by an article I read which was on some newspaper packaging around some car parts I got from U.S. recently. The article said that the vehicles were only for still water, not for serious travel. It turns out they were quite wrong the car being quite seaworthy and a number of lengthy sea voyages were recorded, most notably Africa to Spain and three crossings of the English Channel, once in a Force 6 gale.

It was made in Germany and was the only non-military amphibious vehicle ever to go into mass production. Around 4000 Amphicars were built from 1961 to 1968 and $\frac{3}{4}$ of them went to the U.S. Unfortunately



it was the United State's emission regulations which came into effect in 1968 which killed the vehicle.

The Amphicar is powered by a four cylinder 1147cc, 43hp rear-mounted engine from a Triumph Herald sports car which gave it a top speed of 7mph on wa-



ter and 70mph on land. Hence, it was dubbed the "Model 770". The Amphicar is moved in the water by its twin nylon propellers. A special two-part land-and-water transmission built by Hermes (makers of the Porsche transmission) allows the wheels and propellers to be operated either independently or simultaneously. The "land transmission" is a 4-speed-plus-reverse unit similar to those found in the old Volkswagen Beetles. The "water transmission" is a 2-speed offering unique to the Amphicar featuring single forward and reverse gears. In the water, the front wheels act as rudders.

The backbone of the Amphicar's electric's is basically a Lucas 12 volt positive ground system with certain items



such as the horn, lighting and switches made by other manufacturers such as Hella and Bosch.

All Amphicars are convertibles, and were originally offered in only 4 colors, Beach White, Regatta Red, Lagoon Blue and Fjord Green (Aqua).

The single most important thing to remember when driving these cars in water is "don't open the doors".

Now can you imagine trolling a lure along Corroboree Billabong in one of these? You just have to remember that if a crock looks like he wants to get in, don't open the door to get out.

While writing this story and after researching lots of photos on the net I thought it might be fun to own one. The prices varied from \$50000 to \$80000 US.

Presidents Report

I would like to start by wishing the following members, Leo Izod, Barry Stach and Nev. Sharp a speedy get well from their various ailments. Whilst Leo has been unable to welcome visitors to the hangar a steady band of volunteers have given their time to keep the doors open, for this I thank members including Tom Bertenshaw, Ron and Aileen Blanchard, Ron Green, Trev Feehan, Howard Moses our Alfa king, John Lear and Pete Van Herik.

We have had our first meeting of the new committee and hopefully set the wheels in motion to solve things that have upset some of our longest serving members in recent times. At the general meeting following the sausage sizzle Graham Simpson gave an update on the progress of the new Club Registration Scheme and it all seems to be falling into place, the scheme is still in the draft/discussion stage but minus a lot of the seemingly draconian threats from the first draft. A report from the NT Motor Council (NTMC)

was also presented advising of a new Car Club Insurance scheme that if implemented will save our club big money and give us far better coverage insurance wise. The meeting finished around 8.15 and courtesy of Howard an excellent DVD of Alan Marshal's rare Jensen was shown arriving at the inaugural entry of the all conquering Tiwi Bombers into the NTFL footy competition with our administrator Ted and 99 year old Brother Pye waving happily to the crowd, then another beaut DVD of the hangar and Leo's engines in operation.

Also our Christmas dinner at the Hub in Palmerston on December 16th at 7 for 7.30 start we need a minimum of 40 people cost is \$25 for members \$30 for non members children under 13 half price and if possible bring a Christmas pressy no more than \$10 for our traditional club raffle

Until Next time
Peet

Normally launching your pleasure boat can be a hassle. Not true with an Amphicar



Coming back to the ramp at sunset is a breeze



Filling in spectators has always been a fun part of motorsport.



54 Chev gets used all the time

More stuff in Alice

While cruising Alice Springs I found there are classic cars all over the place. I never saw any VCC numberplates and these cars run full rego and are used normally. My co driver, Shirley, pointed out a green early fifties vehicle in the traffic. Over the week of the games I kept getting a glimpse of it but never close enough to check it out properly. After the games were over and time was a bit less valuable I got lucky. There in the front yard of a house was the green car, a 1954 Chev and a 1936 Buick and their owner, Mike. He welcomed me and my '63 Futura, then



36 Buick lets you know you have arrived at the Blue Moon Restaurant

gave me a tour of his place. This is inner suburban Alice Spings so space is a premium. Like all good enthusiasts Mike has the place chock full of goodies you wouldn't realise. The Chev and the Buick are no show ponies, They are meant to be used and they aren't scared of dirt roads either. Out the back he has a '61 Humber Super Snipe he bought recently. It was running a bit rough. Pulling the head off revealed a bit of the head gasket missing between the two middle cylinders. A new gasket and it runs perfectly. The leather interior is in very good condition and the chrome and stainless steel trim are 100% perfect. All that it really needs is a cut and polish and a real showy vehicle. He wasn't risking much when he paid \$800 for it. A 1951 Ford Pickup with a crane on the back keeps it company. This sidevalve v8 powered vehicle is the workhorse

of the fleet. Mike is a printer at heart. This vehicle was used to move his printing business a while back. Some of the printing machines weigh 2 1/2 tons. Which led us into Mike's office. Stepping through the door is stepping back in time with one machine, a Chandler & Price hand platen printing press being 120 years old. Next door a Heidelberg platen printing press. All around the walls are drawers and shelves of letters and numbers in various sizes and styles and the



Mike and his printing museum

bench where they are laid out and clamped together in a frame to go into the printing press. On a computer you call that formatting I think. All this machinery is working perfectly and Mike gave me a demo printing business cards. You have to pull out the printed card and put in the blank card for the next one in a very short time frame. If you botch it you are probably going to have a very flat hand with some nice printing on it. He can do embossing on it too. That is something the modern machines can't do. There certainly was skill required to be a printer in years gone by. Mike's current project is building a restaurant on the side of his house. The "Blue Moon Restaurant" is to be a 50's theme with décor appropriate for the era and the '36 Buick in the front yard will suit the scene perfectly. Around the New Year it should be ready for business. So next time you are in or passing through



Ford pickup runs perfect. Still used too.

The Alice and you need a meal in a cool, nostalgic setting, just cruise along Undoolya Rd until you see the red Buick in the front yardand enjoy!

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(big adult)

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These items make beaut Xmas stocking fillers for that
special person who already has everything.

Get these items from the hangar or ring Aileen 89275638.

There is a new club.

No Name yet. Their inaugural run is from Wishart Siding
to Manton Dan on Sunday 19th Nov 9am BYO every-
thing. Everyone welcome



The motor vehicle Enthusiasts Club
Extends its thanks to
Shannons
Insurance
For its continued support for the club

Annual Katherine
Toy Run
Saturday 25th of November
ALL BIKES AND CARS WELCOME
\$5.00 TO ENTER

9.00am Meeting at Kumbidgee Lodge for Breakfast
10.30am for an 11.00am start. All meet at the Visitor Information Car Park.

Toy run finishing at the Katherine Sports and Recreation Club. Snacks and drinks will be available.
Our Annual Toy Run is supporting Kintore Street School

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Beat the Heat NT

Charity

Christmas Cruise

25th Nov

Hidden Valley

Gates open noon

Cruise starts 2.00 pm

Costs you a toy to enter

Benefactor is Salvation Army

Prizes for best dressed cars

Whats on

Sun 26 November

Brunch at Darwin River Dam

Meet at Caltex Berrimah 9am, Wishart Siding 9.30am, Darwin River Dam 10am. Cold salad lunch, followed by visit to Rob & Maureen Newman's residence before heading home.

Directions will be available at Darwin River Dam

Sat 16 December

Christmas Dinner

Gunn Room, The Hub, Palmerston 7.00pm

\$25.00 per member, \$12.50 for children under 13 and \$30 for non-members

To confirm booking, money is to be dropped off at the Hangar by Sat 9 December

Place money in envelop and write your name and \$\$ on the envelop.

Each families attending is asked to bring along an item, up to \$10, for inclusion in raffle.

Frid 26 January - Australia Day

Ute Run – all vehicles invited to participate. Details in December newsletter

Late afternoon Club BBQ - possibly Ben's at Yarrawonga, BYO, more details in December newsletter.

If undeliverable return to;
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Katherine meetings

Those comrades in Katherine have been having meetings too. They elected a new committee....

President	Wayne Russell	8971 1325	wayne.russell@powerwater.com	0418 848 815
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Vice Presidents	Albert Wilson	0417 832 506		
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	Greg Bird	8972 1220		
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Secretary	Yvonne Glasson	8971 0605		
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Treasurer	Doug Glasson	8971 0605		
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Activities Officer	Bill Harding	8971 1586		
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Fines Officer	Mike Smith	8972 3711	Fines.....You	better be careful of this bloke!
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Please note the deadline for inclusion in this publication is the second Saturday in each month that it is published unless prior arrangements have been made.